

# News from Ed Markey

**United States Congress**

**Massachusetts Seventh District**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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***REP. MARKEY STATEMENT  
IN REACTION TO  
AMUSEMENT PARK INDUSTRY  
PRESS CONFERENCE***

Rep. Edward J. Markey, leader of the effort in Congress to pass the National Amusement Park Ride Safety Act and advocate of improved safety regulation of amusement park rides, issued the following comments today in a press release regarding the initiatives of the amusement park industry announced today at the Press Club in Washington, DC, by Six Flags and others.

"I am encouraged that the amusement park industry is finally taking so seriously the potential for brain injury on roller coasters and other rides.

When I first raised the issue, there were no G-force standards, in any state or nationally. Now, we actually have enforceable G-force standards in New Jersey and unenforceable but useful voluntary standards nationwide which track the New Jersey standards.

When I first asked the Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA) to review the available literature and reported cases of brain injury on roller coasters, no one had looked at the data in a systematic way. We now have an industry-sponsored analysis, which helps determine the baseline, and at the end of February, I expect to receive the results of a non-industry sponsored analysis from the BIAA.

This will be the first non-industry sponsored review of what is know about injuries to the brain on roller coasters, and will help us identify gaps on the research that need to be filled.

Meanwhile, of course, thousands of park patrons are injured in non-brain injury accidents every year on roller coasters and other park rides, and some of those patrons actually die on these rides. Broken limbs, cuts, sprains or death are not experiences that

anyone expects when they go to the park for entertainment. The vast majority of these injuries occur to children.

Most parents are completely unaware of the fact that while a bicycle is regulated at the federal level by the consumer Product Safety Commission but a roller coaster that carries their child at speeds they would never drive is completely exempt from federal safety regulation.

When a plane crashes, an entire federal agency is devoted to finding out what happened and trying to make sure it doesn't happen again. But when someone dies on an amusement park ride, on which people perish at a higher rate per mile than on airplanes, no federal safety official is even allowed to set foot in the park.

The industry has fought against closing that loophole despite injury data from the Consumer Product Safety Commission showing emergency room accidents on park rides soaring over 90 percent in the last 5 years.

The industry doesn't like what the CPSC finds. Now they want to replace this non-industry, statistically rigorous approach with an industry-sponsored "reporting system" which appears to be a black-box exercise done behind closed doors once a year by without naming rides or parks. Essentially, the industry is Reporting to itself, not to anyone empowered to question the data, enforce consistency, or vouch for its accuracy.

I intend to reintroduce the National Amusement Park Ride Safety Act this Congress. The Act would close this unusual and unjustified special interest loophole in public safety law that puts park patrons at needless risk of injury.

The act would restore the authority that the CPSC originally had, before the industry intervened, to protect consumers by

- i. Investigating serious accidents
- ii. Ordering that unsafe rides be fixed
- iii. Sharing information found about one ride with every other operator who owns a similar ride, EVEN IF IT IS NOT IN THE SAME STATE.

More information concerning this issue and the National Amusement Park Ride Safety Act can be found at [www.house.gov/markey](http://www.house.gov/markey).

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